

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
November 14 - 20, 2013

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1. Shared Values Unite Turkey, United States (11-19-2013)

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — Shared values enable Turkey and the United States to cooperate effectively on many international issues, according to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.

“There are only a few countries — you can count them on one or two hands — who work on as many issues together as effectively as we are working on them,” Kerry said at a joint press availability at the State Department November 18.

“Our partnership is a value-based partnership. And it is a very structured partnership,” Davutoğlu told reporters, noting that he saw Turkish-American relations not only as security-based strategic cooperation but also as cooperation on democracy and economic prosperity, not just for the two nations but also for global society.

Kerry noted U.S.-Turkish efforts to stop the bloodshed in Syria. “We agree that we must get the parties to the negotiating table,” he said. “We are moving closer to that, literally, day by day now,

and we commend the Syrian opposition's recent vote to participate in a Geneva II conference, where we hope to forge the political solution to this conflict."

Kerry praised Turkey's "remarkable generosity" in hosting more than 600,000 Syrian refugees. The United States, the secretary noted, has provided an additional \$96 million in assistance to refugees to Turkey as part of the \$1.3 billion Americans have provided to relieve this humanitarian crisis.

Turkey, which shares a long border with Syria, sees the turmoil in that country as a threat to its own security, according to Davutoğlu. "There are two threats now to Turkish national security," Davutoğlu said. "One is the Syrian regime itself because of the policies; the second is those extremist groups which are misusing and exploiting this power vacuum for their ill intentions."

The United States, Kerry said, is supporting Turkey, a NATO ally, with respect to its border challenges and the unrest in Syria. "The United States is working extremely closely on a daily basis with Turkish officials and ours, cooperating completely with respect to Syria," the secretary said. "We have consistent sharing of intelligence. We work on strategy. We are both involved on the challenges of the borders with respect to humanitarian assistance."

On Iraq, Kerry praised Turkey for its recent high-level meetings with Iraqi officials, which, he said, "are important to every part of what is happening there, particularly in Iraq itself as well as with respect to Syria."

Davutoğlu said his recent visit to Iraq was "very successful, not only successful in restoring our relations in positive faith but also successful in the sense of a clear message to the people of Iraq and to the people of the region that Turkey will be doing everything possible to prevent sectarian tension in the region."

Regarding Iran, Kerry said Turkey helped enforce the sanctions that have brought Iran to the negotiating table. "This was the very purpose of these sanctions, and we are achieving the goal of at least getting to the negotiation," he said. "Now we obviously need to achieve something at that table. We need to remain united in our goal of ensuring that Iran never gets a nuclear weapon."

"We don't want any state obtaining nuclear weapon," Davutoğlu said. "And we appreciate the very strategic approach of President Obama's engagement policy with Iran and your very efficient diplomacy to make this engagement in a positive way for a resolution of this long-standing issue in the region."

Related Articles:

[Hagel, Turkish Foreign Minister Discuss Bilateral Relationship](#)
[State Department Fact Sheet on Turkey](#)

2. Dempsey Addresses U.S. CEOs on Challenges of Leadership (11-19-2013)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19, 2013 – Strengthening the standards of the military profession is a critical mission for the armed services, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said at The Wall Street Journal's CEO Council here last night.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey told more than 100 U.S. executives that the profession of arms is unique, but that leaders have to keep working on the profession to ensure it maintains its ethos.

John Bussey, a Wall Street Journal assistant managing editor, interviewed Dempsey for the event.

Competence and loyalty are two necessary attributes, but the gold standard, Dempsey said, is trust. “You don’t walk out of a forward operating base in Afghanistan unless you have a level of trust in the man or woman to your right and left, your leadership, your medics,” he said.

But responsibility and accountability are important as well, the general told the executives. “There have been missteps recently that we are trying to overcome -- missteps that I attribute to 10 years of frenetic activity -- and I think we forgot a little about how we balance character and competence,” he said.

The chairman stressed that it is not a choice between character and competence, but a blend of the two. “You don’t want a leader in a combat zone who is really a man of great character, but can’t fight his way out of a paper bag,” the general said. “Nor do you want the ultimate warrior god who isn’t a man of character.”

The chairman was loath to compare military and civilian leadership, except in one instance.

“I do think there’s something extraordinary about being given the responsibility for people’s lives,” he said. “That should cause us all pause and put it in perspective. I’ll accept that as part of our uniqueness, which gives us some balance of both physical courage and moral courage that may be unique in our profession.”

The profession of arms has a long and honorable history, Dempsey noted. “We commit ourselves to an uncommon life, and we accept, by becoming a member of the profession, to live to a certain ethos,” he said. “In our case, it is serving the people of the United States and ensuring the common defense -- or, as I like to put it, keeping the country immune from coercion.”

Part of being a leader in a profession is the need to encourage education throughout a career, the general said.

“Other than the medical profession, our continuing education program for leaders in the military is second to none,” he added. “We try to renew our commitment to being part of a profession at various intervals along the way.”

But you are not a profession just because you say you are, the chairman said.

“You have to earn it and re-earn it,” he explained. “And particularly in our relationship with the American people, we have to continue to earn it.”

(Follow Jim Garamone on Twitter: @GaramoneAFPS)

Biographies:

[Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey](#)

3. U.S. Personnel Work Nonstop to Deliver Aid in Typhoon Areas (11-19-2013)

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — U.S. disaster relief experts and military personnel are working around the clock to deliver food, water, medicine and shelter to help the people hit hardest by Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the central part of the Philippines November 8.

The typhoon affected an estimated 10.3 million Filipinos across 44 provinces, according to the latest estimate from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

A USAID team was the first government assessment team to arrive in the affected Leyte province, while U.S. Marines on the ground in the Philippines also were among the first to respond. They were followed by a U.S. aircraft carrier group that arrived November 14.

Days later, USAID Assistant Administrator Nancy Lindborg touched down in the area to assess the typhoon's devastation and to announce an additional \$10 million in aid to enable U.S. personnel to continue to move forward on things like improvements to water systems and logistics. The United States now is providing \$37 million to help people affected by the storm, including \$10 million to the World Food Programme to buy 2,500 metric tons of rice being distributed by the Philippines' Department of Social Welfare and Development.

U.S. assistance has helped to get airports and aid distribution centers running. It also has helped to provide communications support and to expand transportation capacity.

"This has been an extraordinary partnership between USAID and the Department of Defense Pacific Command working in support of the Philippines government," Lindborg said. "We are very committed to helping the people of the Philippines. ... We have to keep the effort moving to push supplies and relief out."

Lindborg also met with senior U.S., United Nations and Philippine officials and observed multilateral, interagency and USAID relief operations. One of her stops was a warehouse at the task force headquarters in the city of Tacloban, Leyte, where volunteers sort emergency supplies provided by USAID and others.

The Philippines government is responding to "one of the largest disasters this country has ever faced," and the United States has been coordinating closely with it at every step to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian assistance to families in need, the White House said in a statement.

Haiyan made landfall on Philippine islands six times with waves of up to 12 meters and sustained winds of 195 miles (315 kilometers) per hour. The number of Filipinos affected by the storm represents 11 percent of the island nation's population.

As of November 19, 1 million people in the affected areas had received locally procured rice and 200,000 people in Tacloban had benefited from restored municipal water service. Emergency shelter materials and hygiene kits were provided to 20,000 families, according to USAID.

President Obama has said that the United States will continue to offer whatever assistance it can to the people of the Philippines, but that help for the country should be more than just a government effort. The best way for people to help others affected by a disaster is to make a cash donation to a reputable relief organization working in the affected area, the White House says.

Related Sites:

[White House website](#)

[U.S. Pacific Command](#)

[Special Report: U.S. Pacific Command](#)

[Special Report: Operation Damayan](#)

[U.S. Agency for International Development](#)

[U.S. Marine Corps Forces Pacific](#)
[3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade](#)

Related Articles:

[U.S. Increases Typhoon Relief for Philippines](#) (11-18-2013)
[Military, USAID Continue Relief Efforts in Philippines](#) (11-17-2013)
[Military Airlifts Supplies, Displaced People in Philippines](#) (11-15-2013)
[George Washington Strike Group Members Assist Filipinos](#) (11-16-2013)

4. Campaign against Maritime Piracy Shows Impressive Gains (11-18-2013)

Washington — The United States joined partners from more than 40 countries, international organizations and the private sector in Djibouti, November 10–14, for the 15th plenary of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.

Since its initial meeting in January 2009, the Contact Group has nearly tripled in size while successful pirate attacks have declined to zero so far this year, the State Department said on its website November 15. “And thanks in part to the Contact Group’s concerted efforts,” the department added, “there has not been a successful pirate attack on a commercial vessel off the Horn of Africa in more than 18 months. This demonstrates the clear global consensus that has emerged against piracy, as well as the recognition that concerted coordinated international action was needed in response.”

The plenary, chaired by the United States and hosted by the government of Djibouti, continued efforts by this international partnership to safeguard commerce and humanitarian aid deliveries along one of the world’s busiest shipping corridors.

Among its accomplishments to date, according to the State Department, the Contact Group has:

- Aided operational coordination of an unprecedented international naval effort of more than 30 countries working together to protect transiting vessels. The United States coordinates in these efforts with other multilateral coalitions such as Combined Maritime Forces, NATO’s Operation Ocean Shield, the European Union’s Operation ATALANTA and independent deployers such as China, India, Japan and Russia.
- Partnered with the shipping industry to improve practical steps merchant ships and crews can take to avoid, deter, delay and counter pirate attacks. The shipping industry’s use of best management practices and the increasing use of privately contracted armed security personnel are among these measures, “which continue to be the most effective deterrents against pirate attacks.”
- Strengthened the capacity of Somalia and other countries in the region to counter piracy, in particular by contributing to the U.N. Trust Fund Supporting Initiatives of States Countering Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.
- Advanced initiatives aimed at disrupting the pirates’ networks ashore through law enforcement approaches similar to those used to target other types of organized transnational criminal networks.

The Djibouti plenary also marked the passing of the Contact Group chairmanship from the United States in 2013 to the European Union for 2014.

More information on U.S. support for international efforts against piracy is available on [State Department](#) and [Contact Group websites](#).

5. Hagel Focuses on Readiness at Reagan Library Speech (11-16-2013)

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 16, 2013 – Long-term preparedness and near-term readiness are being affected by sequestration and America ignores this rise in risk at its peril, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said in California today.

Hagel spoke at the first Reagan National Security Forum at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley. The secretary believes it was appropriate to highlight readiness at the Reagan conference, because Ronald Reagan faced a military readiness crisis when he took office in 1981. The American military was a “hollow force” when Reagan became president and changing that became a priority.

Hagel said military and civilian leaders have made concerted efforts to inform the President, Congress, and the American people “about the growing difficulties we face in training, equipping and preparing our forces under the cloud of budget uncertainty.”

These challenges are cumulative and will become more apparent as time goes on, the secretary said.

“Since 9/11, our military has grown more professional, more lethal and more deployable,” Hagel said. “But it has also grown older -- as measured by the age of our major platforms, particularly our ships and aircraft -- and far more expensive in every area, including the pay and benefits we provide our military personnel.”

Service members are under stress from years of repeated deployments -- and so are the institutions that support, train and equip them.

“The department is currently facing sequester-level cuts on the order of \$500 billion over 10 years,” Hagel said. “This is in addition to the ten-year, \$487 billion reduction in DOD’s budget that is already underway. That means we are looking at nearly one trillion dollars in DOD cuts over this 10-year period, unless there is a new budget agreement.”

The secretary said the cuts are too steep, too deep and too abrupt. He called it an irresponsible way to govern, adding that sequestration forces the department to manage resources poorly.

“Implementing the 10 percent across-the-board cut required by sequestration, the department has been forced to absorb even steeper reductions in the budgetary accounts that fund training, maintenance and procurement -- the core of military readiness,” he said.

The cuts have to be uneven because deploying forces must have the best training and equipment possible. All military services are feeling these cuts.

The Navy’s average global presence is down 10 percent, with particularly sharp reductions in regions like South America, the secretary said. The Army canceled training rotations for seven

brigade combat teams. It now has just two of 43 active-duty brigade combat teams fully ready and available to execute a major combat operation.

Air Force units lost 25 percent of the annual training events that keep them qualified for their assigned missions. Marine Corps units not going to Afghanistan are getting 30 percent less funding, just as the service is facing demands for more embassy security, Hagel said.

“These are all current readiness realities, and they have all occurred since the imposition of sequestration in March,” he said. “But the effects will be felt for a long period of time to come. By continuing to cancel training for non-deploying personnel, we will create a backlog of training requirements that could take years to recover from. And inevitably, we are shrinking the size of the force that is ready and available to meet new contingencies or respond to crises across the globe.”

Operation Damayan, the U.S. military operation that’s providing relief to typhoon-ravaged areas of the Philippines, may not be possible in the future.

To readiness cuts can be added delays in re-orienting the force to meet new and emerging threats.

“For 12 years, the bulk of U.S. forces have been organized, manned, trained and equipped to respond to the specific requirements of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan,” Hagel said. “As the demand of the second of these two wars comes to an end, the military has been re-orienting its training in order to build into the force a broader set of capabilities across the spectrum of conflict, particularly at the high-end. These efforts have also been seriously disrupted by sequester-level cuts.”

If sequestration continues, the military will not be prepared to perform its missions, Hagel said. It would be a bet that there would not be a major contingency operation against a capable adversary in the near-term.

The secretary called on Congress to fix these serious and deep problems.

“It will require Congress giving the Department of Defense the time and flexibility to strategically implement budget reductions and make the difficult choices necessary for the future,” Hagel said. “We must also rollback sequestration and fully fund the President’s budget request. Leaders across the Department will continue to give their best and most honest and clear-eyed assessment to America’s elected leaders about the consequences of leaving these steep and damaging cuts in place.

“We need the certainty of a budget,” the secretary continued. “This perpetual dark cloud of uncertainty hanging over this department further hinders responsible and wise planning and confidence.”

Hagel stressed that all aspects of the DOD budget must be searched to find savings. DOD leaders need to pare back overhead costs and eliminate excess infrastructure. They also need to reform personnel and compensation policy.

(Follow Jim Garamone on Twitter: @GaramoneAFPS)

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

Related Sites:

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[Remarks by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel at Reagan National Defense Forum](#)

6. Women Critical to Afghanistan's Success, Kerry Says (11-15-2013)

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — The full participation of women in Afghan society — particularly through elections in 2014 — is critical to the success of the country, says Secretary of State John Kerry.

“There can be no peace without respecting the rights of all Afghans, and Afghan women have to have a seat at the table,” Kerry said at a November 15 Georgetown University symposium, “Advancing Afghan Women: Promoting Peace and Progress in Afghanistan.”

The event, which was co-sponsored by the George W. Bush Institute, the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council and the Alliance in Support of the Afghan People, was co-chaired by former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and former first lady Laura Bush.

Kerry lauded the progress Afghan women have made since 2001, citing the following statistics:

- In 2001, there were only 900,000 Afghan children in school, mostly boys. Today, nearly 8 million students are in school, and more than a third are girls.
- In 2001, maternal mortality was 1,600 per 100,000 births; today, it's down by 80 percent.
- Life expectancy for all Afghans has risen from 42 years to 62 years from 2004 to 2010.
- Access to health care has risen from 9 percent to 60 percent.
- Cellphone access for women, once virtually nonexistent, is now at 80 percent.

Kerry said more Afghan women are venturing into entrepreneurial enterprises and politics. “When Afghan women run their own businesses, all Afghans profit from a more diverse, dynamic and inclusive economy,” he said. “And when Afghan women hold public office at the local and national levels, all Afghans gain a stronger voice in their communities.”

Kerry emphasized the importance of the 2014 elections. “We all know that the single most important milestone over the next year is the peaceful transfer of power from President Karzai to a democratically elected successor,” he said, saying that the election must be “a unifying moment for the country, not a divisive one.”

Afghan women, Kerry said, “are leading the charge to ensure that the elections next year are credible, inclusive and transparent.” The United States, he said, is “very pleased to lend our support, in partnership with the United Nations, to train female volunteers as they facilitate secure access for women at the polls. There is no question that lasting security and prosperity in a unified Afghanistan will take root only when women have as loud a voice as men — not just on election day, but every day.”

Kerry added: “The success of the political transition is essential. It's the prerequisite to the future stability of Afghanistan. But make no mistake — it's not enough, it's not sufficient, it won't do the

job alone. That's why the United States firmly supports and will continue to support an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation effort as the surest way to end the violence and bring lasting stability to Afghanistan and the region."

Kerry said that he has met many Afghan women who fear that the gains of the past decade could be lost, and he acknowledged that despite the significant achievements of Afghan women and girls, many challenges still remain.

"The road ahead is not easy," Kerry said. "The violence that has plagued Afghanistan for decades has left very deep wounds, and it is going to take time to heal. We also know that security is going to be a real challenge. We know that Afghans have to strengthen the rule of law. They have to improve access to justice. We also know that discrimination and violence against women continue to be major problems."

"As Afghanistan sees women standing up in Afghanistan to take control of their country's future — not only for themselves, but for all Afghans — we have to be determined that they will not stand alone," Kerry said. "America will stand up with them as they shape a strong and united Afghanistan that secures the rightful place in the community of nations. And that is why President Obama and President Karzai signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement last year that lays out our mutual commitments. And that's why America's relationship with Afghans is changing; it's not ending."

Related Sites:

[Kerry at Symposium on "Advancing Afghan Women"](#)

7. State's Biswal Cites Gains, Challenges for Democracy in South Asia (11-15-2013)

The opinion article below by Nisha Biswal, assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs, was posted online by Reuters on November 15.

Fighting for Democracy in South Asia

By Nisha Biswal

Washington — For the first time in post-colonial history, all of the countries of South Asia are democracies.

From Bhutan to Bangladesh, Kabul to Kathmandu, democratic institutions are taking hold and giving people a voice in how they are governed. But these historic gains could be short-lived if troubling trends in some impending political transitions go unchecked.

Over the next six months, more than 1 billion voters across South Asia will choose leaders of some of the most diverse and vibrant countries in the world. Coming elections in India and Afghanistan and successful recent elections in Pakistan and Bhutan illustrate the depth of passion voters across the region have shown for electoral democracy.

Yet, major setbacks in Bangladesh and the Maldives, and worrying signs in Nepal underscore just how fragile and vulnerable these democracies are and why the international community must remain engaged in supporting democracy in South Asia.

In Bangladesh, as the ruling Awami League Party and the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party dispute how to hold constitutionally mandated elections this winter, there has been increasing

political instability — with rallies and general strikes that have at times turned violent. The longer the two sides cannot agree on a framework for an interim government to oversee the next election, the more likely Bangladeshi citizens will take to the streets to express their frustrations.

In the Maldives, the island nation is on the edge of a political crisis. After weeks of political bickering and dubious stalling tactics, including a rejection of the first round of voting, which most observers deemed free and fair, the Maldives faces one last chance to salvage its democracy — with runoff elections this Saturday.

Any further delay or derailing of the elections process will thwart the democratic aspirations of the Maldivian people and erode their right to elect a leader of their choice. The election on November 16, and then the prompt inauguration of a new president, is crucial to averting a dangerous setback. The Maldives' political leaders and institutions must show they can deliver on the hopes and needs of their citizens.

The United States and the international community call on all political leaders and institutions of government to act in the interest of the people and in safeguarding the democratic process.

One bright spot is Nepal's November 19 elections, where thousands of candidates are vigorously contesting to replace the country's Constituent Assembly, disbanded in May 2012. The new assembly's primary responsibility will be to draft a permanent constitution, establishing a political structure that reflects the diversity of Nepal's people. Yet, despite growing enthusiasm among Nepali voters, a collection of fringe opposition groups are fomenting unrest and strikes in an effort to undo this hard-won progress.

The reality is that no democracy — including the United States — is immune to political infighting and partisan politics. With the recent government shutdown, Americans experienced the far-reaching and damaging consequences that ensue when politicians are unwilling to put the good of the country above ideological differences and political partisanship. But ultimately, we also witnessed our political leaders finding ways to compromise to move the country forward.

What happens in South Asia matters to the United States. Much of the story of the 21st century will be written in this region. With a sixth of the world's population, a third of the world's Muslims, and 800 million youth under age 30, the choices South Asians make will have significant consequences for the their countries, the region and the world.

This is why the United States has actively supported electoral reform, institution building, parliamentary strengthening and rule of law across the region. Successful political transitions are critical for consolidating democratic and economic gains and bringing people out of poverty.

Perhaps nowhere will this be more evident than in Afghanistan, where presidential and provincial elections in April 2014 will either support a successful security transition or undermine the gains of the past decade. Though election preparations are on track, Afghans must remain vigilant to ensure a political process that allows citizens to freely choose their leaders without manipulation, vote-rigging or other forms of fraud.

In India next spring, 600 million citizens will embark on one of the world's largest electoral processes when they vote in parliamentary elections. A vigorous and open public debate is already underway.

There are successful lessons to be learned from each of these countries' histories and from the recent election successes in Pakistan and Bhutan. For the first time, Pakistan's national elections

culminated in the transfer of power from one democratically elected civilian government to the next, and Bhutan's successful National Assembly elections in July also led to a peaceful transfer of power to a new prime minister. These marked historic steps of democratic evolution in the region.

The key now is for citizens across South Asia to demand a credible, free and fair electoral process that validates their voices and choices in a peaceful manner. At its core, democracy is about protecting the rights of individuals, especially their right to vote and express themselves freely.

These are not American values; they are universal values. And the United States will continue to champion them across South Asia so that all societies achieve their full potential — and enhance the stability and prosperity of their region and the world.

8. Remarks by President Obama on Philippines, Iran (11-14-2013)

Following are excerpts of President Obama's press briefing related to U.S. foreign policy. The full transcript of the president's press briefing is available on the White House [website](#).

THE PRESIDENT: Today I want to update the American people on our efforts to implement and improve the Affordable Care Act, and I'll take a couple of your questions. But before I do, I just want to say a few words about the tragedy that's unfolded in the Philippines.

Over the past few days, I think all of us have been shaken by the images of the devastation wrought by Typhoon Haiyan. It's a heartbreaking reminder of how fragile life is, and among the dead are several Americans. So our prayers are with the Filipino people, and with Filipino Americans across our country who are anxious about their family and friends back home.

One of our core principles is, when friends are in trouble, America helps. As I told President Aquino earlier this week, the United States will continue to offer whatever assistance we can. Our military personnel and USAID team do this better than anybody in the world, and they've been already on the ground working tirelessly to deliver food, water, medicine, shelter, and to help with airlift. Today, the aircraft carrier USS George Washington and other ships arrived to help with search-and-rescue, as well as supplies, medical care and logistical support. And more help is on the way.

America's strength, of course, has always been more than just about what our government can do — it's also about what our citizens can do. It's about the big-heartedness of the American people when they see other folks in trouble. So today, I would encourage everybody who wants to help, to visit WhiteHouse.gov/typhoon -- that's WhiteHouse.gov/typhoon -- and that will offer you links to organizations that are working on the ground and ways that you can support their efforts. Our friends in the Philippines will face a long, hard road ahead, but they'll continue to have a friend and partner in the United States of America. ...

So with that, I'm going to take your questions.

Q: Do you have reason to believe that Iran would walk away from nuclear talks if Congress draws up new sanctions? And would a diplomatic breakdown at this stage leave you no option but military action? And how do you respond to your critics on the Hill who say that it was only tough sanctions that got Iran to the table, but only tougher sanctions will make it capitulate?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me make a couple of points. Number one, I've said before and I will repeat: We do not want Iran having nuclear weapons. And it would be not only dangerous to us and

our allies, but it would be destabilizing to the entire region, and could trigger a nuclear arms race that would make life much more dangerous for all of us. So our policy is Iran cannot have nuclear weapons. And I'm leaving all options on the table to make sure that we meet that goal.

Point number two: The reason we've got such vigorous sanctions is because I and my administration put in place, when I came into office, the international structure to have the most effective sanctions ever. And so I think it's fair to say that I know a little bit about sanctions, since we've set them up, and made sure that we mobilize the entire international community so that there weren't a lot of loopholes and they really had bite.

And the intention in setting up those sanctions always was to bring the Iranians to the table so that we could resolve this issue peacefully, because that is my preference. That's my preference because any armed conflict has cost to it, but it's also my preference because the best way to assure that a country does not have nuclear weapons is that they are making a decision not to have nuclear weapons, and we're in a position to verify that they don't have nuclear weapons.

So as a consequence of the sanctions that we put in place — and I appreciate all the help, bipartisan help, that we received from Congress in making that happen — Iran's economy has been crippled. They had a -5 percent growth rate last year. Their currency plummeted. They're having significant problems in just the day-to-day economy on the ground in Iran. And President Rouhani made a decision that he was prepared to come and have a conversation with the international community about what they could do to solve this problem with us.

We've now had a series of conversations, and it has never been realistic that we would resolve the entire problem all at once. What we have done is seen the possibility of an agreement in which Iran would halt advances on its program; that it would dilute some of the highly enriched uranium that makes it easier for them to potentially produce a weapon; that they are subjecting themselves to much more vigorous inspections so that we know exactly what they're doing at all their various facilities; and that that would then provide time and space for us to test, over a certain period of months, whether or not they are prepared to actually resolve this issue to the satisfaction of the international community — making us confident that, in fact, they're not pursuing a nuclear weapons program.

In return, the basic structure of what's been talked about, although not completed, is that we would provide very modest relief at the margins of the sanctions that we've set up. But importantly, we would leave in place the core sanctions that are most effective and have most impact on the Iranian economy, specifically oil sanctions and sanctions with respect to banks and financing. And what that gives us is the opportunity to test how serious are they, but it also gives us an assurance that if it turns out six months from now that they're not serious, we can crank — we can dial those sanctions right back up.

So my message to Congress has been that, let's see if this short-term, phase-one deal can be completed to our satisfaction where we're absolutely certain that while we're talking with the Iranians, they're not busy advancing their program. We can buy some additional months in terms of their breakout capacity. Let's test how willing they are to actually resolve this diplomatically and peacefully.

We will have lost nothing if, at the end of the day, it turns out that they are not prepared to provide the international community the hard proof and assurances necessary for us to know that they're not pursuing a nuclear weapon. And if that turns out to be the case, then not only is our entire sanctions infrastructure still in place, not only are they still losing money from the fact that they can't sell

their oil and get revenue from their oil as easily, even throughout these talks, but other options remain.

But what I've said to members of Congress is that if, in fact, we're serious about trying to resolve this diplomatically — because no matter how good our military is, military options are always messy, they're always difficult, always have unintended consequences, and in this situation are never complete in terms of making us certain that they don't then go out and pursue even more vigorously nuclear weapons in the future — if we're serious about pursuing diplomacy, then there's no need for us to add new sanctions on top of the sanctions that are already very effective and that brought them to the table in the first place.

Now, if it turns out they can't deliver, they can't come to the table in a serious way and get this issue resolved, the sanctions can be ramped back up. And we've got that option. ...

Thank you, everybody.

9. Assistant Secretary Nuland on "A Trans-Atlantic Renaissance" (11-14-2013)

*Remarks by Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, November 13, 2013*

Toward A Transatlantic Renaissance: Ensuring Our Shared Future

Thank you, Damon, for the warm introduction. I'm so pleased to be here in the brand new offices of the Atlantic Council. Under Fred Kempe's leadership and thanks to the creative energy of two of my favorite Wilsons -- Damon and Ross -- both collaborators and friends for many years -- the Atlantic Council has had its own renaissance as a vital center of TransAtlantic conversation about all the key global issues: from economics and energy, to the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. You're making it cool again to be a Europeanist. For that, I thank you.

It is no accident that I wanted to give my first speech as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia at the Atlantic Council because today I want to talk about doubling down on the Transatlantic relationship.

I know, I know. Once every four years -- or perhaps every four days -- someone in a position like mine shows up here to talk about why Europe still matters, and how important we are to each other, even as the headlines are all about the Middle East or other troubled regions of the world. Or worse -- they come here to preach Atlanticism just as the news is full of gloom and doom about the fraying of trust between us -- whether the issue of the day is Iraq or the financial crisis or now the NSA disclosures.

But none of these bouts of turbulence changes the fundamentals: America needs a strong Europe, and Europe needs a strong America. The greater the Transatlantic and global challenges, the more important it is that the United States and Europe address them together. No other nations will step up if we don't; yet other nations will and do join us when we, as a Transatlantic community, lead the way and give collective action our shared seal of approval and our involvement. The world needs a community of free nations with the will and the means to take on the toughest challenges, and to work for peace, security and freedom when they are threatened.

But today, as a Transatlantic community, we are standing at another vital inflection point in our ability to play that essential role, both at home and abroad. As our economies begin to emerge from

five years of recession, recovery is not enough. What is required is a “Transatlantic Renaissance” – a new burst of energy, confidence, innovation, and generosity, rooted in our democratic values and ideals. When so much of the world around us is turbulent and unmoored, we are once again called to be a beacon of security, freedom and prosperity for countries everywhere. That will require both confidence and investments at home, and commitment and unity abroad. Together, we must lead or we will see the things we value and our global influence recede.

Today, I want to talk about the key elements of a Transatlantic Renaissance, and what we have to do together to make it a reality. At home, our most urgent economic task is to strengthen the foundations of our democratic, free-market way of life. That means working together for an ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership that sets the global gold standard for openness and growth. TTIP can be for our economic health what NATO has been to our shared security for 65 years: a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. When we eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade across the Atlantic, we’ll support hundreds of thousands of new and better-paying jobs. We will also strengthen our hand in the global conversation to advance the kind of open, rules-based public commons in which our nations thrive. TTIP is so much more than a trade agreement. It is a political and strategic bet we are placing on each other and our shared future. We need to go all in, and I commend the leading role that the Atlantic Council plays to build public support for TTIP.

Together, we are also in the midst of a major advance in energy diversification and independence. If just five years ago, many of us worried almost as much about energy security as our physical security, today the landscape has changed utterly. The EU has made wise decisions to de-monopolize and diversify its market. Member states are investing in renewables, LNG terminals, new pipelines and interconnectors, shale gas and nuclear power, and the U.S. is a major investor in many of these projects. The United States has increased its own oil production by 35 percent and gas production by 25 percent. Today, America is the top natural gas producer in the world. But there is more to do. To complete the map of energy security in the Transatlantic and Eurasian space, now is the time to be innovative and generous with each other. We have to spend the money to build the regional interconnectors, buy each other’s technology, share access to critical infrastructure, export to each other, and continue to help neighbors resist monopoly practices or political intimidation.

The energy renaissance could, in turn, unlock new opportunities in our 25 year project to build a Europe whole, free and at peace. With the discovery of significant gas resources off Cyprus, Cypriot Foreign Minister Kasoulides has publicly predicted that gas could play as important a role in healing the island’s divisions as the coal and steel industry played in 1949 between France and Germany. The United States is impressed by the commitment of the two Cypriot sides led by President Anastasiades and Turkish Cypriot leader Eroglu over recent months to work together for a truly bizonal, bicommunal federation on the island. We also appreciate the support of Turkey and Greece for a mutually acceptable settlement between the parties. Today, both the leadership and shared interest are in place for a comprehensive settlement; this moment must not be squandered. A settlement will have benefits far beyond the island. It will also have a profoundly positive effect across the Eastern Med and on NATO-EU relations.

Two weeks before the EU’s summit in Vilnius, it is also a historic moment for Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. All three countries have made advances in rule of law, democracy and market openness in order to meet the EU’s strict conditions for Association Agreements and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. The United States welcomes these nations’ European choice and wants to see all three knitted into the European family with the kinds of trade benefits and visa free travel the EU offers. Ukraine, in particular, has three last steps to take to meet the EU’s conditions –

passage of judicial and electoral reform legislation, and the release of former Prime Minister Tymoshenko from prison for medical treatment. We join the EU in urging Ukraine's leaders to make the right historic choice for their 45 million citizens -- to choose their children's future over the grievances of the past.

We are also encouraged by the commitments Serbia and Kosovo have made toward long-term reconciliation, under the patient mentorship of EU High Representative Cathy Ashton and with the full U.S. backing. This process needs our continued support so that both countries achieve their goal of integrating fully into European structures. In another positive development, President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and President Sargsian of Armenia will meet later this month for the first time in almost two years. They have it in their power to launch comprehensive settlement talks, and we urge them to be bold and creative. And in Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is well past time for leaders to demonstrate courage and vision -- to move past petty power interests to build a modern, unified nation worthy of the talents and aspirations of all three communities. But if these leaders continue to block the country's path to EU and NATO membership, Bosnia's international partners, including the United States, should reevaluate our approach.

As we work to overcome old hatreds and grievances and finish the democratic map of Europe, we must neutralize another poison that threatens too many of Europe and Eurasia's young democracies: corruption. Popular confidence in elected government is dropping across Europe's center and east because voters believe their leaders feed their own interests first and the people's second. Corruption is a pernicious killer of democratic dreams. Our stability and renewal will depend on more effective joint measures to battle this deadly threat.

And just as the original European Renaissance ushered in an age of greater humanism, intellectual openness and citizens' rights, so must our work today for a Transatlantic Renaissance include defending and advancing the universal values that bind us as free nations. The quality of democracy and rule of law in Europe and Eurasia is deeply uneven today, and in too many places the trends are moving in the wrong direction. Too many citizens do not feel safe running for office, criticizing their governments, or promoting civil society. In too many places, press freedom is stifled, courts are rigged and governments put their thumbs on the scales of justice. If, as a Transatlantic community, we aspire to support and mentor other nations who want to live in justice, peace and freedom, we must stand with those in our own space who are fighting for democratic progress and individual liberties. Our democratic values are just as vital a pillar of our strength and global leadership as our militaries and our economies.

Hard security matters too, of course. As a former Ambassador to NATO, I am amazed how far our Alliance has come. In the past 20 years, we've gone from a 'deployment-free zone' to operations on three continents with almost 50 global partners that protect hundreds of millions of people -- from Kosovo to Afghanistan to Libya to securing the Med and counter-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean. With our ability to plug-and-play with so many partners, NATO has become the TransAtlantic core of the international security community.

But I'm also dismayed that Allies expect to sleep safely at night on the cheap and ever cheaper. Just five years ago, average defense spending by our Allies stood at around 1.7 percent of GDP. By 2012, it had dropped to below 1.4 percent. So, as we bring our combat troops home from Afghanistan and look toward a NATO Summit in the United Kingdom next fall, we need a renaissance in the way we think about collective defense and security. That means spending smarter by spending more together on the most vital 21st century capabilities -- from joint intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance, to deployable headquarters, to integrated strike capability. It means staying sharp and deployable through an aggressive exercise schedule that keeps North

Americans, Europeans and our global partners interoperable. And it means consolidating all we've learned in the last two decades about training and support for third-country militaries into a permanent, standing training capability. If NATO, in conjunction with the EU, can train others more, we can fight less. But training alone won't be enough. When people ask me what NATO is for after we stop fighting in Afghanistan, I invariably hear the Ghost Busters theme song in my head: "Who ya gonna call?" The question for us is: will we be ready and willing to answer that call, whenever and wherever it comes next?

More broadly, the world counts on our Transatlantic community to bring creative solutions to the world's most urgent problems, from climate change to countering terrorism to addressing poverty and hunger. As the President has said so many times, Europe is our global partner of first resort. Today, there is no place where our experience, our ideals and our resources are more needed than on Europe's own periphery -- an area that is also of vital national interest to the United States -- across the Mediterranean, in the struggling nations of North Africa and the Middle East. It matters to all of us how the Arab Spring turns out -- will the preponderance of people there eventually live in freedom, prosperity and peace, or will tyrants and terrorists prevail?

The investment that the Transatlantic community and other nations make now will have an impact on the outcome. From Libya to Tunisia to Egypt to Lebanon to Iran to Syria to our work to support Middle East Peace, the United States and Europe are strongest when we share the risk, the responsibility and yes, the financial burden of promoting positive change. But this too requires leadership, including making the case to our own people that our fates and those of our neighbors are intertwined. In today's interconnected world, strength at home and strength abroad are a package deal.

And I firmly believe that when we can find common purpose with Russia, the whole world benefits. When we take nuclear and chemical weapons out of service together, we're all better off. We can't stop working to find areas where we can bring Russia to the table. We should, for example, focus intensively in coming years on increasing two-way trade and investment between the United States and Russia by reducing tariffs and other barriers wherever possible, and by connecting our people and businesses at the regional level. We should also focus on spurring educational exchange, innovation and entrepreneurship so that the next generation of Russians and Americans grow up as partners and friends, and lose the zero-sum glasses of their parents. But, even as we seek to build ballast and mutual benefit into our relationship, Americans will never sugar coat it when we disagree with the Russian Government's treatment of its political opposition, free media, NGOs, and members of the LGBT community, not to mention some of its foreign policies. Nor can we fall victim to a false choice between our interests and our values. For us, they are also a package deal.

Some of you no doubt are now thinking again about the wave of disclosures and allegations about the NSA so let me return to that for a moment. We understand the difficulties the current situation has caused for our Allies and friends. The President is determined to get the balance right between our citizens' security and their privacy. He has ordered intelligence reviews, and we are having intensive consultations with Allies on this topic. But make no mistake: the intelligence work we do -- much of it jointly with Allies and partners -- has foiled terrorist plots on both sides of the Atlantic and kept us all safer. So as we work together to restore trust and balance, let's also stand together to protect the gains we have made since September 11th, 2001, including the Terrorism Finance Tracking Program, the Passenger Name Record program and the Safe Harbor arrangement. As Americans and Europeans know better than anyone, there can be no liberty without security, just as there can be no security without liberty. If we continue to work together, we can and will strengthen both.

In closing, let me go back to where I began: it should not be enough for us to simply recover as a Transatlantic community. We can and must make the kinds of investments in each other now -- and in our way of life -- to continue to play the leadership role that the world needs and expects of us in these complex times. America and Europe have each tried going it alone at various moments, and the results are rarely good. We need each other to be our best. And, we are at an inflection point. Those who want to live in peace and freedom around the world are looking to us for a "Transatlantic Renaissance." I believe that is within our grasp. For almost seventy years the Transatlantic community has been the rock on which the world order rests. Our challenge, on both sides of the Atlantic, is to ensure that remains the case. Thank you.

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